

Claims:

1. A system for providing role-based Presentity availability information to a Watcher, comprising:

at least one Presentity User Agent for issuing a request to register a Presentity in at least one of a plurality of roles, and for generating context messages relating to changes in context of said Presentity;

at least one Watcher User Agent for issuing a role-based subscription request for said availability information;

a Presence Service for maintaining role-based Watcher subscriptions and issuing availability messages in response to generation of said context messages; and

a Role Manager for (i) receiving each request to register a Presentity in said at least one of said plurality of roles and in response managing Presentity registration in said plurality of roles, and (ii) receiving each said role-based subscription request, and in response managing each role-based Watcher subscription to said availability information within said Presence Service.

2. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said Presence Service comprises:

a shared database for publishing a Subscribe Event and a Notification Event in response to receiving each said subscription request and context message, respectively;

at least one Presence Agent for receiving said Subscribe Event and in response triggering a set of subscription policies that either confirm or reject each of said role-based Watcher subscriptions, and for receiving said Notification Event and in response triggering a set of notification policies to selectively generate said availability messages.

3. A system as claimed in 2, wherein said Role Manager is a Role Group Manager for effecting user-centered management of roles by registering said Presentity with said at least one Presence Agent in said at least one of said plurality of roles, and subscribing said Watcher within said least one Presence Agent to said Presentity in said at least one of said plurality of roles.

4. A system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said role-based subscription request identifies said Presentity and includes a role definition therefor.

5. A system as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, wherein each of said notification policies includes a role switch for Presentity control of availability in said at least one of said plurality of roles.
6. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said Role Manager is a Role Manager Service for effecting user-independent management of roles by subscribing said Watcher to said at least one of said plurality of roles irrespective of said Presentity.
7. A system as claimed in claim 6, wherein said role-based subscription includes a role definition therefor.
8. A system as claimed in claim 6 or claim 7, wherein each of said notification policies includes a watcher switch for identifying said Watcher and a status line for controlling availability of said Presentity in said at least one of said plurality of roles.
9. A system as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 8, wherein said shared database is a tuple space.
10. A system as claimed in claim 1 and substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to or as illustrated in the accompanying Figures 1 to 6 inclusive.